

May 2002

\$3.2 MILLION SET ASIDE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS **Innovative Loan Proposed To Maximize Community Development Block Grant Funds**

When I first started walking door to door to meet constituents, more often than not people told me they wanted the City to pay more attention to the ailing infrastructure in our older urban neighborhoods. I heard this so much that I made it one of my Top 10 Priorities for the district.



The completion of the El Cajon Boulevard Median Project is one of many infrastructure improvements funded by a \$3.2 million Section 108 loan proposed as part of this year's CDBG allocations.

In an attempt to jumpstart a variety of capital improvement projects throughout Council District Three, I recently came up with a plan to create a \$3.2 million Section 108 Infrastructure loan to fund these projects. I did this as part of the Fiscal Year 2003 CDBG block grant allocations for the district. This loan will allow for the full and expedited funding of major streetscape and neighborhood improvement projects which otherwise might have taken years to fund and complete.

By grouping these projects together and paying for them at one time through this loan, we'll be able to provide the citizens of our district real and substantial results in a much quicker time frame.

For example, \$712,000 of the infrastructure fund will allow for the completion of the El Cajon Boulevard Median Project from Texas Street to 30th Street, while \$705,00 will allow for extensive improvements to Adams Avenue as part of the Adams Avenue Business Association's (AABA) public improvement projects. Those projects include sidewalk, curb and gutter repairs, street elevations and storm drains, tree well pavers, along with plants and landscaping at the Adams Avenue Portals at the gateway to the Interstate 805 off-ramp.

Additionally, \$450,000 was allocated and will pay for the entire North Park Main Street Streetscape Project, which runs from Idaho Street to Granada Street along University Avenue. This project includes the demolition and replacement of deteriorating sidewalks, curbs, gutters and alley aprons, as well as the installation of street trees, tree wells, decorative tree grates and other landscaping. Included will be the installation of pedestrian ramps which will make University Avenue more accessible to those who are disabled.

Also included in the loan are smaller neighborhood projects such as the Azalea Park Neighborhood Identification Project (\$40,000), which includes streetscape and landscape improvements along Poplar Avenue; the Shirley Ann Place Sidewalk Project (\$20,000), which is the second phase of the beautification plan for this historic University Heights street; the Hillcrest Streetscape Project (\$150,000) along University Avenue; and the Historic Talmadge Gate Restoration Project (\$53,050), which will restore and rehabilitate the gates and gate lights in the existing historic gateways of the Talmadge Ornamental Gates Historic District.

The final component of the infrastructure fund earmarks \$750,000 for District Three sidewalks, \$150,000 for mid-block streetlights in City Heights, and \$150,000 for mid-block streetlights elsewhere in the district.

I feel it is important to maximize our funds by making significant improvements in every corner of the district. This \$3.2 million allocation of CDBG funds is my commitment to the residents of District Three that I will keep neighborhood improvements at the top of my priority list.

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HOUSING HELP IS ON THE WAY

Affordable Funding Plan, Inclusionary Housing Get Committee Support

Clearly, just about everyone in San Diego knows we're in the midst of a housing crisis. Toward that end, I have been pushing—since last November—for the City Council to declare a Housing State of Emergency in the City. Councilmember Ralph Inzunza has since joined me in this quest, and finally, in late April, the Land Use and Housing Committee of the City Council voted unanimously to have the full City Council consider declaring a Housing State of Emergency in response to our rising housing and rental costs.

In a press conference held immediately preceding the committee hearing, Councilmember Inzunza and I unveiled an innovative funding plan which would immediately produce approximately \$60 million for affordable housing projects citywide. The funds are produced by pooling and bonding against the affordable housing tax increment revenue from the redevelopment areas citywide, including Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC). The proposal was included in the Housing State of Emergency Declaration that will be sent to the full City Council for review.



Councilmember Atkins unveils a funding plan to bring more affordable housing units throughout San Diego.

We have never bonded CCDC's housing revenues before, but this is in no way a new concept. Municipalities throughout the state have adopted this method of financing as the most fiscally sound and prudent way to make use of our scarce public resources. Adopting this funding plan will allow us to build housing projects that are already in the pipeline sooner, create more new rental and ownership opportunities as soon as within the year, and make dollars available to build housing as part of our City of Villages.

Also passed unanimously were a collection of inclusionary housing proposals which had been submitted to the committee. If any of the proposals are ultimately passed by the council it will be the first time the City of San Diego has adopted an inclusionary housing requirement for developers.

I support inclusionary housing because it provides housing for working families—teachers, police officers and low- and

middle-income families struggling to break into our housing market. The City needs an inclusionary plan that provides housing in every neighborhood—not just our older, urban communities. Any plan we adopt has to support putting jobs where people live, and putting housing where people work. I believe this is the only way to solve our jobs/housing imbalance.

ENTER, STAGE LEFT

North Park Theatre Revival Clears First Hurdle

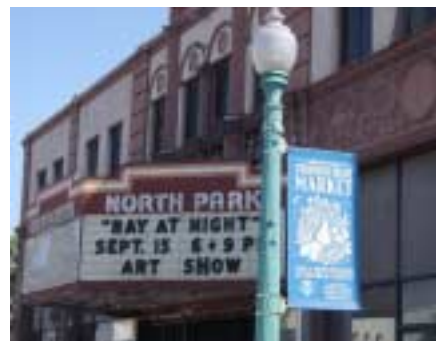
They say that good things come to those who wait, and for the residents of North Park who have been trying for more than a decade to revive the North Park Theatre as a live theatre venue, the wait may finally be over. On April 23, the Council unanimously approved a development agreement with Bud Fischer to renovate the historic theatre, a landmark structure that has been a cornerstone in the community since 1929.

I was honored to make the motion supporting this action and see this as a watershed moment in the history of North Park. As I said that day at Council, I believe the timing is perfect for us to take this bold move forward to bring the North Park Theatre back to life.

As part of the DDA, Mr. Fischer is required to exercise his “best efforts” to locate a tenant who will operate the premises as a venue for live theatre. Both Fischer and representatives of the San Diego Comic Opera testified at the meeting that they are working toward an agreement which will make the North Park Theatre the permanent home of the Comic Opera. A large amount of my support and confidence in the DDA going forward was based on the Comic Opera's plans to raise funds to upgrade the theatre and host a diverse assortment of performing arts entities at the theatre.

One major concern of the community's, which I share, is parking. Toward that end the Redevelopment Agency has commissioned a parking study of the surrounding area which is expected to substantiate the need for a 400-car parking structure to sustain this live-theatre venue. The results of the study should be ready in approximately four months.

The revitalization of the North Park Theatre remains one of my Top 10 Priorities for Council District Three. It's an important



The re-opening of the North Park Theatre is one of Councilmember Atkins' Top 10 Priorities for the district.

community asset that the residents of my district have asked me to fight to save, and I will continue to do all I can to make a live theatre venue in North Park a reality at this site.

The City's agreement with developer Bud Fischer, operating under the name North Park Theatre, LLC, brings more than 30 years of experience in rehabilitating historic buildings in San Diego to this project. Fischer and the performing arts community are also contributing \$2.6 million to the renovation's estimated \$5.9 million cost.

Renovations will include remodeling the theatre to accommodate 800 seats, a new theatre entrance and marquee, and interior improvements such as air conditioning, heating, and lighting. The theatre will feature 5,800 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and 6,700 square feet of office space on the second floor.

CUT AND COVER!

Cutting-Edge Park Opens on I-15 Deck

Remember what it was like to drive down 40th Street between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue just a few short years ago? It wasn't a pretty site: abandoned houses, broken sidewalks, and empty lots covered with litter and debris; all sad by-products of the stalled I-15 project.



The beautiful new Teralta Park, which sits atop I-15, is the first cut-and-cover park of its kind in California.

Today, a beautiful, innovative, cut-and-cover park now sits at Orange Avenue and 40th Street where there once was urban blight. Teralta Park is the shining end result of community members working with Caltrans and the City to negotiate three new community parks as part of the I-15 park project mitigation. It was decided that a "cut and cover" park above the freeway would help connect the community that was divided by the new freeway. It is the first of its kind in the state and one of a handful of community parks nationwide that were constructed on a concrete surface that spans a block over a freeway.

On April 20th I was joined by Mayor Dick Murphy, Congresswoman Susan Davis, Assemblymember Christine Kehoe, former Assemblymember Denise Ducheny, and City officials for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the grand opening of the park.

The new park provides many amenities for the community, including open turf areas, picnic tables, picnic shelters, two half-court basketball courts, a tot lot, raised planters, walkways, security lighting, trash receptacles and drinking fountains. The park also incorporates Polk Avenue, which is intended to become a pedestrian corridor through this City Heights neighborhood.

The construction of this 5.4-acre park was a joint effort by the City of San Diego and Caltrans. The park cost \$2,894,000, with \$2,494,000 coming from Caltrans. The City contributed the remaining \$400,000 to cover the cost of picnic benches and shelters, tot lot equipment, skate stoppers and anti-graffiti coating.

Caltrans is currently applying for federal Transportation Enhancement Act funding on the City's behalf to provide additional facilities at Teralta Park as well at other parks in the Mid-City area. Additional improvements will include a comfort station and a community-identification-theme element.



(left to right): Councilmember Atkins, community activist Karen Manley, Mayor Dick Murphy, Congresswoman Susan Davis, Assemblymember Christine Kehoe, and former Assemblymember Denise Ducheny at the recent Teralta Park grand opening.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Updated District Three Resource Directory Available in June

In an effort to provide citizens with important phone numbers to deal with issues that arise in their day-to-day lives, I am again offering a phone guide entitled "Resource Directory Information for Citizens Assistance: 2002-2003." This booklet contains phone numbers of city and county government and social service agencies, libraries, recreation programs and other numbers of interest to District Three residents, business owners, social service agencies and other organizations within Council District Three.

I'm offering this resource guide to help the residents and business owners of District Three get the assistance they need quickly. Most of the time people prefer to access services directly, but just don't know where to call. This guide should help them locate not only the numbers for basic city services, but also some of those hard-to-find numbers for unique issues that pop up in their everyday lives.

To receive a copy, call 619/236-6633.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER IS NATION'S FIRST

\$50,000 in District Three CDBG Funds Given

Last month I was honored to join a unanimous City Council to approve the creation of America's most innovative justice center for families of domestic violence. The San Diego Family Justice Center will be the first facility in the nation to house, in one location, the entire domestic violence units of the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office, while also housing other experts and community advocates including forensic medical professionals, prevention specialists and probation officers, and a host of other professionals and social workers who work with victims of domestic violence.

Children who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence suffer scars that do not heal on their own. The San Diego Family Justice Center will provide help for children as they go from the first to the last step of the healing process. I firmly believe we need to break the cycle of domestic violence, and we need to start with our children.



Councilmember Atkins announces a \$50,000 District Three CDBG contribution to the Family Justice Center.

Unfortunately, domestic violence calls are one of the highest calls for police service in Mid-City. To help battle this problem and support the Family Justice Center I allocated \$50,000 in District Three Community Development Block Grant funds. These funds will be matched by the California Endowment.

The current system makes it difficult for victims to seek help and unintentionally wears them down because domestic violence professionals and services are scattered throughout the city and county. San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn first envisioned the idea of a one-stop shop for domestic violence professionals and services back in 1989 when he was a young prosecutor working in the trenches. In those days, domestic violence was not taken seriously by the criminal justice system. Today the City Attorney and the Police Department each have specialized domestic violence units.

Each year the Police Department documents about 11,000 domestic violence incidents within the city of San Diego and law enforcement agencies in the County of San Diego document another 15,000 domestic violence cases. In 1999, shortly after he was confirmed San Diego Police Chief, David

Bejarano embraced the vision to create the San Diego Family Justice Center. In the last three years, community forums, focus groups, and strategic planning meetings have been held on the issue of creating a Family Justice Center.

Last October, Gwinn and Assistant Police Chief Rulette Armstead presented the revolutionary plan to San Diego City Council's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, which I chair.

Currently, there are two phases to the San Diego Family Justice Center. Phase one seeks \$3-million to sustain the project for four years at 707 Broadway in downtown San Diego, near the courthouse and public transportation. The ultimate dream is a permanent site which will allow expansion of community services and other governmental agencies. The center is scheduled to be opened in July 2002.

For more information about the San Diego Family Justice Center visit the following website: www.sandiegodvunit.org.

PHOTO GALLERY



Councilmember Atkins presented a resolution making May 19-25 "Emergency Medical Services Week" in San Diego.

Councilmember Atkins presented Jim Baross of the San Diego Bicycle Coalition with a resolution proclaiming May 17th as "BikeTo Work Day" in the City of San Diego.



Councilmember Atkins participated in the YO! SPOT Workforce Partnership youth training center grand opening on May 17th.

